country in the sea-coast and lake-side places of this State and whether the levying of a high duty on it does not materially affect its price and so render the position of the workers often extremely helpless in leading even a hand-to-mouth existence; and

(*c*) whether the duty levied on coir now (13-12-1103) bears to its price the same proportion as it did ten years ago, and, if not, whether, in the interests of public well-being, the Government will consider the question of reduction of the present rate of duty levied on it?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Chief Secretary to Government*):

(*a*) Coir Bh. Rs. 5,69,591
Cocoanut husk ,, 4,159

(*b*) The manufacture of coir is one of the chief cottage industries of the poor in the backwater region. The duty levied on coir is not more than five per cent. of the market value of the ordinary varieties. This is not high. Travancore coir has a good market and in its better varieties hold practically a monopoly position in the trade. The levying of the existing low rate of duty on coir cannot therefore materially affect its selling price.

(*c*) Information regarding the market value of coir ten years ago is not available. Its present market value is a little higher than the tariff value and therefore it is against the accepted principle of Customs Law to reduce the tariff value now. Any reduction in the rate of duty on coir will also adversely affect the mats and matting industry which supports a large section of manufacturers and labourers in the country since, without the prohibition offered by the export duty on the raw material, it would become possible for mats and matting to be manufactured abroad in competition with Travancore manufactures.

Control of the Police Department.

10. **MR. G. P. NILAKANTA PILLAI** (*Karunagapalli*): Will the Government be pleased to state what arrangements have been made for the effective control of the Police Department since the departure of Mr. W. H. Pitt?

MR. P. N. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Secretary to Government*): The Government appointed the Ag. District Superintendent of Police, Trivandrum, to be in charge of the current duties of the Commissioner of Police under the personal control of the Dewan. The present Commissioner took charge on the 17th August 1928.

Cocoanut Palm Diseases.

11. **MR. G. P. NILAKANTA PILLAI** (*Karunagapalli*): (*a*) Will the Government be pleased to state whether any statistics of cocoanut palm diseases have been or are being prepared by the Agricultural Department for each taluk?

(*b*) If so, will they be pleased to lay on the table the statistics for the last five years (1099-1103)?

(*c*) Will they be pleased to consider the desirability of appointing an expert to investigate the diseases of cocoanut trees?

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